

JOURNAL



INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

Vol. I.

PROVIDENCE, November 15, 1845.

No. 1.

RHODE ISLAND INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

The following Constitution was adopted at a public meeting of the friends of popular education from all parts of the State, held in Westminster Hall, Providence, January 24, 1845.

ARTICLE 1. This association shall be styled the **RHODE ISLAND INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION**, and shall have for its object the improvement of public schools, and other means of popular education in this State.

ARTICLE 2. Any person residing in this State may become a member of the Institute by subscribing this Constitution, and contributing any sum towards defraying its incidental expenses.

ARTICLE 3. The officers of the Institute shall be a President, two or more Vice-Presidents, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, (with such powers and duties respectively as their several designations imply,) and Directors, who shall together constitute an Executive Committee.

ARTICLE 4. The Executive Committee shall carry into effect such measures as the Institute may direct; and for this purpose, and to promote the general object of the Institute, may appoint special committees, collect and disseminate information, call public meetings for lectures and discussions, circulate books, periodicals and pamphlets on the subject of schools, school systems and education generally, and perform such other acts as they may deem expedient, and make report of their doings to the Institute at its annual meeting.

ARTICLE 5. A meeting of the Institute for the choice of officers shall be held annually in the city of Providence, in the month of January, at such time and place as the executive committee may designate, in a notice published in one or more of the city papers; and meetings may be held at such other times and places as the executive committee may appoint.

ARTICLE 6. This constitution may be altered at any annual meeting by a majority of the members present, and any regulations not inconsistent with its provisions may be adopted at any meeting.

OFFICERS FOR 1845.

JOHN KINGSBURY, President.
 WILKINS UPDIKE, Vice President, *Washington County*.
 ARIEL BALLOU, Vice President, *Providence County*.
 NATHAN BISHOP, Corresponding Secretary.
 J. D. GIDDINGS, Recording Secretary.
 THOMAS C. HARTSHORN, Treasurer.

DIRECTORS.

WILLIAM GAMMELL, Providence.	J. T. HARKNESS, Smithfield.
JOSEPH T. SISSON, North Providence.	J. S. TOURTELLOTT, Gloucester.
J. B. TALLMAN, Cumberland,	AMOS PERRY, Providence,
L. W. BALLOU, Cumberland,	CALEB FARNUM, Providence,
SAMUEL GREENE, Smithfield.	

PROSPECTUS OF THE JOURNAL.

In pursuance of the object for which the Rhode Island Institute was established—"the improvement of public schools and other means of popular education in this State," arrangements have been made to publish, during the winter of 1845-6, a paper, to be called the JOURNAL OF THE RHODE ISLAND INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION.

The Editorial Department will be under the care of Henry Barnard, Commissioner of Public Schools.

The Business Department will be under the superintendence of Thomas C. Hartshorn, to whom all orders for the paper, and subscriptions for the same should be addressed.

The first number of the Journal will be issued in November, and its publication will be continued thereafter, on the 1st and 15th of each month, until the volume is completed by the publication of twelve numbers.

Each number will contain at least sixteen pages in octavo form; and in addition, from time to time, an EXTRA will be published, containing official circulars, notices of school meetings, and other educational movements; and also one of a series of "*Educational Tracts*," prepared by the Commissioner of Public Schools.

The volume, including the EXTRAS and "*Educational Tracts*" will constitute at least three hundred pages.

The price will be fifty cents for a single copy; or three dollars for ten copies sent in a single package, and at the same rate for any larger number sent in the same way.

The subscription must be paid on the reception of the first number.

JOHN KINGSBURY,	} Committee of Publication.
THOMAS C. HARTSHORN,	
NATHAN BISHOP,	
AMOS PERRY,	

Providence, November 6, 1845.

We have assumed the labor and responsibility of conducting the Editorial Department of the JOURNAL OF THE RHODE-ISLAND INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION, while we remain connected with the administration of the school system of the State, from a deep conviction

of the importance of such a paper as a medium of official communication with school committees, trustees, teachers and the public generally,—on subjects which are likely to be presented for explanation and direction, and for the various information essential to the improvement of schools, and calculated to prevent litigation, and arrest disputes that too often prove fatal to the harmony of districts.

The JOURNAL will be the repository of all documents of a permanent value relating to the history, condition, and improvement of public schools and other means of popular education in the State. It will contain the laws of the State, relating to schools, with such forms and explanations as may be necessary to secure uniformity and efficiency in their administration. It will contain suggestions and improved plans for the repairs, construction, and internal arrangements of school-houses. It will aim to form, encourage, and bring forward good teachers; and to enlist the active and intelligent co-operation of parents, with teachers, and committees in the management and instruction of schools. It will give notice for all local and general meetings of associations relating to public schools, and publish any communications respecting their proceedings. It will give information of what is doing in other states and countries, with regard to popular education, and in every way endeavor to keep alive a spirit of efficient and prudent action in behalf of the physical, intellectual and moral improvement of the rising and all future generations in the State.

In conducting the Journal, we shall aim to publish in the regular semi-monthly numbers, only such articles and documents as are of permanent value, as connected with the legislation of the state respecting public schools, or as throwing light on the condition and improvement of schools and other means of popular education in the several towns.

In the EXTRAS, which will be issued from time to time, will be published all official circulars, notices for school-meetings with accounts of their proceedings, and communications relating to individual schools and improvements in education generally. The extras will be pagged continuously, independent of the paging of the regular numbers of the Journal.

In the series of "EDUCATIONAL TRACTS" will be embraced fuller discussions, original and selected, of important topics in some one department of popular education. Each Tract will be complete in itself, and can be circulated independent of the Journal.

Report on Public Schools.

In prosecution of the plan thus briefly stated, we commence in this number of the Journal, the publication of a **REPORT ON THE CONDITION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND OTHER MEANS OF POPULAR EDUCATION IN RHODE ISLAND**, prepared agreeably to the provisions of the following Act of the General Assembly, and Circular of Governor Fenner, relating thereto.

AN ACT

TO PROVIDE FOR ASCERTAINING THE CONDITION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THIS STATE, AND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND BETTER MANAGEMENT THEREOF. *Passed October, 1843.*

Be it enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. The Governor of this State shall employ some suitable person as agent, for the purposes hereafter mentioned, at a reasonable compensation for his services.

SEC. 2. The said agent shall visit and examine the respective Public Schools in this State; ascertain the length of time each district school is kept, and at what season of the year; the qualifications of the respective teachers of said schools—the mode of instruction therein—collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of our Public Schools and other means of popular education, and diffuse as widely as possible among the people a knowledge of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies, and conducting the education of the young, to the end that the children of this State who depend upon common schools for instruction, may have the best education that those schools may be made to impart; and shall make report to the legislature with such observations and reflections as experience may suggest, upon the condition and efficiency of our system of popular education, and the most practicable means of improving the same.

SEC. 3. It shall be the duty of the preceptors of the public schools in the respective districts in this State, from time to time, to furnish said agent with all the information he may require, in order to enable him to carry out the provisions of this act.

TO THE PEOPLE OF RHODE ISLAND.

In pursuance of An Act "to provide for ascertaining the condition of the Public Schools of this State, and for the improvement and better management thereof," I have secured the services of HENRY BARNARD, who has had several years experience in the discharge of similar duties in a neighboring state, and observed the working of various systems of public instruction in this country and in Europe.

Mr. Barnard will enter immediately on the duties of his office. His great object will be to collect and disseminate in every practicable way, information respecting existing defects and desirable improvements in the organization and administration of our school system, and to awaken, enlighten and elevate public sentiment, in relation to the whole subject of popular education. With this view, he will visit all parts of the State, and ascertain, by personal inspection, and inquiries of teachers, school committees, and others, the actual condition of the schools, with their various and deeply interesting statistical details. He will meet, in every town, if practicable, such persons as are disposed to assemble together, for the purpose of stating facts, views and opinions, on the condition and improvement of the schools, and the more complete and thorough education of the people. He will invite oral and written communications from

teachers, school committees, and all others on the subject, respecting their plans and suggestions for advancing the intellectual and moral improvement of the rising, and all future generations, in the State. The results of his labors and inquiries will be communicated in a Report to the General Assembly.

In the prosecution of labors so delicate, difficult and extensive, Mr. Barnard will need the sympathy and co-operation of every citizen of the State. With the most cordial approval of the object of the Legislature, and entire confidence in the ability, experience and zeal of the gentleman whom I have selected to carry it out, I commend both to the encouragement and aid of all who love the State, and would promote her true and durable good, however discordant their opinions may be on other subjects.

JAMES FENNER.

Providence, Dec. 6, 1843.

REPORT
ON THE
CONDITION AND IMPROVEMENT
OF THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY :

Before entering on the administration of the system of Public Schools as organized by an act which passed your honorable body in June, and which by the terms of the act takes effect on and after this date,* I beg leave to submit a more detailed Report† than I have yet done of my proceedings under the act "to provide for ascertaining the condition of the Public Schools, and for the improvement and better management of the same, arranged under the following heads :"

- I. MODE OF ASCERTAINING THE CONDITION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
- II. MEASURES ADOPTED TO INTEREST AND INFORM THE PUBLIC MIND AND PREPARE THE WAY FOR A MORE COMPLETE AND EFFICIENT SYSTEM.
- III. DEFECTS IN THE LAWS RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS THEY WERE, WITH AN OUTLINE OF THE SYSTEM AS AT PRESENT ORGANIZED.
- IV. CONDITION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR THEIR IMPROVEMENT.
- V. OTHER MEANS OF POPULAR EDUCATION.

I.

In following out the general directions of the Act above cited, and of the Circular of his Excellency the Governor, commending the objects of my appointment to the co-operation of the people of the State, my first object was to ascertain the condition of the public schools, and the actual working of existing laws for their administration, as the only basis of any sound le-

* November 1, 1845.

† A portion of this Report was prepared several months since, but its publication was suspended, until it could be known whether the General Assembly at the October session would make any alteration in the *Act respecting Public Schools*, passed in June, 1845, upon the provisions of which many suggestions for the improvement of schools contained in this document are based.

gislative or local action on the subject. This I aimed to do as follows :

1. By personal inspection and inquiry.

Since my appointment I have visited every town in the state twice, and those towns where improvements were in progress more frequently; have inspected upwards of two hundred schools while in session, scattered through every town, in small and obscure as well as in central and populous districts; have conversed with more than four hundred teachers of the winter or summer schools, as to their methods of classification, instruction and discipline, and the extent of co-operation received by them from parents and school committees; have questioned and examined children in the schools and out of them, to test the results of their school education; have had personal communication with the school committee of every town, and improved every opportunity to learn from the friends of education generally, their views as to the practical working of the system of public schools.

2. By circulars addressed to teachers and school committees.

More than one thousand circulars, (Appendix, Numbers 1. and 11.) embracing the most minute inquiries respecting the external and internal arrangement and management of schools, the size, population, pecuniary ability, parental and public interest in education, of each district—the location, construction, furniture and appurtenances of school-houses—age, sex, education, experience, success, and compensation of teachers,—the attendance, classification, studies, books, apparatus, methods of teaching, discipline, length of school, time and length of vacation, and other topics relating to the public schools—the number, grade and influence of private schools, lyceums, libraries, lectures, and other means of popular education—were addressed to teachers and school committees in the several towns, inviting not only statistical returns, but a full and free expression of views of existing defects and desirable improvements. These circulars were so framed as necessarily to direct the attention of those into whose hands they should come, to certain causes which impair the usefulness of the schools, and suggest improvements that would make the existing means of education more efficacious. Although answers were not returned in all cases, enough were received from such a number and variety of districts, as to substantiate or modify the result of my own personal observations.

3. By the official returns and reports of school committees.

The annual returns of the town school committees to the Secretary of State, although imperfect, show the working of the school system for a period of six years in some important particulars, while the annual reports which the same committee in some of the towns have made, but not published, respecting their own

proceedings, and the condition and improvement of the public schools under their supervision, throw much light on the objects of my appointment.

4. By statements in public meetings.

In the meetings which have been held in every town in the state, called by public notice, and open to free discussion, many interesting and important facts respecting school-houses, the non-attendance of children at school, the variety of school books, the character, qualifications and habits of teachers, have been stated on the personal knowledge of the speakers.

These are the principal sources which I have consulted for information respecting the means and condition of popular education in the State, and the information thus obtained is the basis of such plans and suggestions as I have elsewhere, or shall herein propose for immediate or permanent improvement in the system and the schools.

II.

¹ As at once the condition and source of all thorough, extensive and permanent improvement in the public schools, under the laws as they were or in the laws themselves, I have aimed to disseminate as widely as possible, by all the agencies within my reach, a knowledge of existing defects and practical remedies, and to awaken in parents, teachers, school committees, and the public generally, an inquiring, intelligent and active interest in all that relates to the advancement of public schools and popular education. Among the means and agencies resorted to for these objects, the following may be specified.

1. By public lectures.

Immediately after entering on the duties of my appointment, I commenced holding a series of meetings, which I have continued from time to time as frequently as my strength would allow, of such persons as were disposed to come together on public notice, in the several towns of the state, for familiar and practical addresses and discussions, on topics connected with the organization and administration of the school system, and the classification, instruction and discipline of public schools. (Appendix, Number III.) These meetings have been numerous attended, and the addresses have proved useful in awakening public interest, and disseminating information as to the best modes of improving popular education. When the meetings already appointed have been held, more than five hundred addresses will have been made by myself, and others invited by me; and at least one meeting will have been held in every large neighborhood in every town in the State.

2. By conversation and written communications.

The time not devoted to public meetings, in my circuits through the state, was spent in the school-room, and in personal interviews with teachers, school officers, and the friends of ed

uation, where an opportunity was presented for applying the general views advanced in my public addresses, to the circumstances of a particular school-house, school district or town. The time and labor thus spent, although out of public view, and although no public record of the amount, or of the results can ever be made, I feel to be as serviceable to the objects contemplated in my appointment, as any portion of my official labors. In this connection I can add, that besides preparing and addressing over four thousand printed circulars, I have written upwards of one thousand letters, in replies to inquiries addressed to me, or on subjects connected with the improvement of the schools.

3. By circulating tracts, periodicals and documents relating to schools, school systems and education generally.

In the absence of any periodical devoted to education in the state, I commenced the publication of a series of "Educational Tracts," (Appendix, Number iv.) for gratuitous distribution. To secure their general dissemination, under such circumstances that they would be likely to be read, and in families which they might otherwise not reach, arrangements were made by which upwards of ten thousand copies were stitched to the Farmer's, and the Rhode Island Almanacs, which were sold in the winter of 1844-5. Want of time, and the pressing nature of other duties, have prevented my continuing the publication of the series as originally contemplated.

Arrangements were also made with the publishers of the Common School Journal, edited by Horace Mann, Secretary of the Board of Education in Massachusetts, and of the District School Journal of the State of New York, edited by Francis Dwight, Superintendent of the Common Schools of the city and county of Albany, by which a large number of these excellent Journals for the current year were subscribed for in different parts of the state. These two Journals contain all the official school documents of their respective states, in which the most judicious and vigorous measures have been taken to perfect the system of public instruction, as well as a variety of interesting and valuable articles, original and selected from the pens of experienced educators, calculated to assist, inform, and interest school officers, teachers and parents every where, in the work of making common schools more useful and complete.

In addition to the above works, I have secured the dissemination of a variety of other books and documents, (Appendix, Number vi.) which were calculated to make known the nature, extent and results of the efforts now making to devise, extend, and perfect systems of public education on both sides of the Atlantic; to form and assist good teachers by making them acquainted with improved methods of school government and in-

struction; and especially to enlist the more active, generous and vigorous co-operation of parents and the public generally, in this work. Among these works, as the most valuable single volume now before the public, and which should be in the hand of every teacher, and school committee in the state, and the whole land, I would particularly mention the *School and School-master*, the joint production of Prof. Potter and George B. Emerson.

But the circulation of these and similar documents, and of educational periodicals published out of the State, even more extensively than has yet been done, can never supply the place of a periodical published here. Peculiarities of local convenience and interest render such periodicals desirable in each state; and in this State, and at this time, when great efforts are making in different towns, and in districts widely separated from each other, to improve the schools, and when important alterations have been made in the organization and administration of the whole system, such a periodical is indispensable as an organ of communication between those who are laboring in different departments of the same field; and for official direction and explanation to those who have the local administration of a new system, involving great variety and some complexity of details, in its first starting.

4. By establishing a library of education in every town.

As a permanent depository of the most valuable books and documents relating to schools, school systems, and particularly to the practical departments of education, I have nearly completed arrangements, to establish a library of education (Appendix, Number vi.) in every town, either to be under the management of the school committee of the town, or of some district or town library association, and in either case to be accessible to teachers, parents, and all interested in the administration of the school system, or the work of the more complete, thorough and practical education of the whole community. Each library will contain about thirty bound volumes, and as many pamphlets. To these libraries, the Legislature might from time to time hereafter, forward all laws and documents relating to the public schools of this state, and at a small annual expense, procure the most valuable books and periodicals which should be published on the theory and practice of teaching, and the official school documents of other states, and thus keep up with the progress of improvement in every department of popular education. These libraries will be made much more valuable for purposes of reference, by an index to the various topics discussed in the several volumes and pamphlets which it is my intention to prepare as one of the series of *Educational Tracts*.

5. By recommending and aiding in the formation and proceedings of associations for the improvement of public schools.

The object aimed at was to bring the friends of school

improvement, scattered over a town, county, or the state even, together, as often as their convenience will allow, that by an interchange of views, and acquaintance with each other, they may form new bonds of sympathy, and channels of united effort in promoting its success. It is applying to the advancement of public schools the same instrumentality which has proved so useful in every other great enterprise of the day.

The earliest association of the kind was formed in Washington County, and within a period of a little more than a year from its organization, it has held twelve general meetings in the different towns in the county, most of which have continued in session through two days; secured the services of a local agent to inspect the schools, and deliver lectures in every district; and by the circulation of books, periodicals and documents on this subject, has awakened a very general and lively interest, and laid the foundation of great and progressive improvements in the organization, instruction and discipline of public schools.

The Kent County association was formed in February last, and has held general meetings in most of the large neighborhoods of the county, which have in most instances been numerously attended by parents and others residing in the immediate vicinity.

The Smithfield and Cumberland Institute has held ten public meetings, and includes among its officers and members some of the most ardent and intelligent friends of education in the state.

The Rhode Island Institute of Instruction was formed in January last; and its officers and members, by attending and addressing public meetings in different parts of the state, have already rendered me very important co-operation, and done essential service in the cause of educational improvement.

A more particular account of the organization and proceedings of these associations will be given in the Appendix.

These associations should be extended so as to embrace the females, and especially the mothers of a district or town. Let the mothers read, converse with each other, and become well informed as to what constitutes a good school, and the fathers and brothers who are voters will be reminded of their neglect of the school interest of the district or town. Let them visit the places where their little children are doomed to every species of discomfort, and improvements in the seats, desks, modes of warming and ventilating school-rooms, will follow. There is a motive power in the ardor and strength of maternal love, if it can once be properly informed and enlisted in this work, which must act most powerfully and beneficently on the improvement of public schools, and the progress of society generally.

6. By assisting school committees in the selection of teachers.

Whenever called upon by school committees, and especially in reference to schools which from their location might become

under good teachers, *models* in all the essential features of arrangement, instruction and discipline, for other schools in their vicinity, I have felt that I was rendering an essential service towards "the improvement and better management of the public schools," by aiding in the employment of such teachers. If but one good teacher could be permanently employed in each town, the direct and indirect influence of his teaching and example would be soon felt in every school; and his influence would be still more powerful and extensive if arrangements could be made so as to facilitate the visitation of his school by other teachers, or so as to allow of his making a circuit through the districts and towns in his vicinity, and give familiar and practical lectures and illustrations of his own methods of instruction. It is necessary to the rapid progress of education that parents, committees and teachers, should see and know what a good school is, and feel that "as is teacher so is the school." Whoever may fill the office of Commissioner of Public Schools, can render important service to the schools by keeping a memorandum, or entering in a book all applications from teachers, their names, age, attainments, moral character, experience, the kind of school they had taught, or should prefer to teach, the compensation they would be content to receive, their references, the places where they had taught; and on the other hand, the kind of teacher wanted by any district, the grade of school, number of scholars, rate of compensation, &c. &c., and thus assisting good teachers to desirable situations.

7. By encouraging the more extensive and permanent employment of female teachers.

In all the schools visited the first winter, or from which returns were received, out of Providence, and the primary departments of a few large central districts, I did not find but six female teachers; and including the whole state, and excepting the districts referred to, there cannot have been more than twice that number employed. This is one evidence of the want of prudence in applying the school funds of the districts, and of the low appreciation of the peculiar talents of females, when properly educated as teachers,—their more gentle and refined manners, purer morals, stronger interest and greater tact and contentment in managing and instructing young children, and of their power when properly developed, of governing even the most wild and stubborn minds by moral influences. Two thirds at least of all the schools which I visited, would have been better taught by female teachers, who could have been employed at half the compensation actually paid to the male teachers, and thus the length of the winter school prolonged on an average of two months. Convinced as I am from many years observation in public schools, that these institutions will never exert the in-

fluence they should on the manners and morals of the children educated in them, till a larger number of well trained and accomplished females are employed permanently as teachers, either as principals or assistants, I have every where and on all occasions urged their peculiar fitness for the office. I have reason to believe that at least fifty female teachers, in addition to the number employed last year, are now engaged in the public schools of the state. But before the superior efficiency of woman in the holy ministry of education, can be felt in its largest measure, her education must be more amply and universally provided for, and an opportunity afforded for some special training in the duties of a teacher; and a modification of the present practice and arrangement of districts be effected.

8. By introducing a gradation of schools in the manufacturing and other populous districts.

It was very soon evident that in many of the large villages, and particularly in the manufacturing districts, the privileges of the public school were wasted in consequence of the large number of children of all ages, in a great variety of classes, which were crowded together under one teacher, or at most two teachers, in the same room. To remedy these evils, in some instances committees have been induced to classify the children according to their attainments, placing the younger and less advanced in a primary school, under a female teacher, and the older and more advanced by themselves, under a well qualified male teacher.

It is in this class of districts that the work of improvement will go forward most rapidly under the operation of the new school law. In the prospect of its adoption, the inhabitants of Westerly have, within the last month, voted unanimously to reorganize their school system,—establishing three grades of schools to be taught through the year, and providing a thorough and liberal course of instruction for all the children of the community. Teachers, who enjoyed the confidence of parents in the private schools, have been employed for the public schools, and a tax sufficient to erect two new school-houses, and repair and properly furnish the old house, was voted without a dissenting voice.

9. By recommending and assisting in the formation of Teachers' Associations, or Institutes.

By the first designation as now generally used, is understood the temporary, and by the latter, the more permanent organization of teachers for mutual improvement, and the advancement of their common profession. Teachers in every town have been urged to hold occasional meetings, or even a single meeting, for the purpose of listening to practical lectures and discussions, or what would in most cases be better, of holding familiar conversation together, on topics connected with the arrangement of schools, on methods of instruction now practised, or recommended in the various periodicals or books which they have consulted,

and on the condition of their own schools. But something more permanent and valuable than these occasional meetings, has been aimed at by an organization of the teachers of the state, or at least of a single county, into a Teachers' Institute, with a systematic plan of operations from year to year, which shall afford to young and inexperienced teachers an opportunity to review the studies they are to teach, and to witness, and to some extent practice the best methods of arranging and conducting the classes of a school, as well as of obtaining the matured views of the best teachers and educators on all the great topics of education, as brought out in public lectures, discussions and conversation. The attainments of solitary reading will thus be quickened by the action of living mind. The acquisition of one will be tested, by the experience and structure of others. New advances in any direction by one teacher, will become known, and made the common property of the profession. Old and defective methods will be held up, exposed and corrected, while valuable hints would be followed out and proved. The tendency to a dogmatical tone and spirit, to one-sided and narrow views, to a monotony of character, which every good teacher fears, and to which most professional teachers are exposed, will be withstood and obviated. The sympathies of a common pursuit, the interchange of ideas, the discussion of topics which concern their common advancement, the necessity of extending their reading and inquiries, and of cultivating the power and habit of written and oral expression, all these things will attach teachers to each other, elevate their own character and attainments, and social and pecuniary estimate of the profession.

One such Institute was organized in Washington County last winter, and held five meetings, at which written and verbal reports were made by teachers respecting the condition of their respective schools, the difficulties encountered from irregularity of attendance, and want of uniformity of books, the methods of classification, instruction and government pursued, and the encouragement received from the occasional visits of parents and committees. This Institute proposes to hold a meeting, after the teachers of the county are engaged for the present season, to continue in session from one to two weeks.

Arrangements have been made for opening Teachers' Institutes in other counties, to which all teachers, male and female, who are, or who expect to be engaged to teach in the public schools of the state this winter, have been invited to attend.

10. By an itinerating normal school agency.

With the co-operation of the Washington County Association, the services of a well qualified teacher was secured to visit every town in that county for the purpose, among other objects, of acting directly on the schools as they were, by plain, practical exposures of defective methods, which impair the usefulness

of the schools, and illustrations of other methods which would make the schools immediately and permanently better. The same course will be pursued the present season in other parts of the state.

11. By preparing the way for at least one Normal School.

Although much can be done towards improving the existing qualifications of teachers, and elevating their social and pecuniary position, by converting one or more district schools in each town or county, into a model school, to which the young and inexperienced teacher may resort for demonstrations of the best methods; or by sending good teachers on missions of education throughout the schools of a county; or by associations of teachers for mutual improvement,—still these agencies cannot so rapidly supply in any system of public education, the place of one thoroughly organized Normal School, or an institution for the special training of teachers, modified to suit the peculiar circumstances of the state, and the present condition of the schools. With this conviction resting on my own mind, I have aimed every where so to set forth the nature, necessity, and probable results of such an institution, as to prepare the public mind for some legislative action towards the establishment of one such school, and in the absence of that, to make it an object of associated effort and liberality. I have good reason to believe that any movement on the part of the state, would be met by the prompt co-operation of not a few liberal minded and liberal handed friends of education, and the great enterprise of preparing Rhode Island teachers for Rhode Island schools, might soon be in successful operation.

12. By devising and making known improved plans of school-houses.

The condition of the school-houses, was in my circuit through the schools, brought early and constantly under my notice, and to effect an immediate and thorough reform, public attention was early and earnestly called to the subject. The many and great evils to the health, manners, morals, and intellectual habits of children, which grow out of their bad and defective construction and appurtenances, were discussed and exposed, and the advantages of more complete and convenient structures pointed out. In compliance with the request of the Committee on Education, a law authorizing school districts to lay and collect a tax to repair the old, and build new school-houses, was drafted and passed; and in pursuance of a resolution of the General Assembly, a document was prepared embodying the results of my observations and reflections on the general principles of school-architecture, and such plans, and descriptions of various structures recently erected, for large and small, city and country districts, and for schools of different grades, as would enable any committee to act understandingly, in framing a plan suita-

ble to the wants of any particular district or school. The same document was afterwards abridged and distributed widely, as one of the "*Educational Tracts*," over the state. I have secured the building of at least one school-house in each county, which can be pointed to as a model in all the essential features of location, construction, warming, ventilation, seats and desks, and other internal and external arrangements.

During the past two years, more than fifty school-houses have been erected, or so thoroughly repaired, as to be substantially new—and most of them after plans and directions given in the above document, or furnished directly by myself, on application from districts or committees. Some of them will be described in the account of the schools of the several towns to be given in the Appendix.

13. By encouraging the introduction, and aiding in the selection of school apparatus and libraries.

Much of the inefficiency of school education of every grade is mainly owing to the want of such cheap and simple aids for visible illustration, as every district can supply, and of modes of communication based upon and adapted to such apparatus, which every teacher of ordinary intelligence can acquire and practise, and especially in reference to elementary principles. With many children, their education, so far as books are concerned, terminates with the schoolroom, from the want of access to a library. These two wants I have aimed to supply to some extent. The value of many schools in the state under the same teacher has been doubled by the introduction and use of the black-board, of the slate by small children, of outline maps in teaching geography, and other cheap forms of visible illustration. More than one thousand volumes have been purchased for school libraries, on more advantageous terms than the same number of books could have been purchased in smaller lots, by several committees acting independently of each other.

14. By Lyceum, Lecture, and Library Associations.

In taking an inventory of the means of popular education in the state, this class of institutions, which help to supply the defects of early elementary education, and carry it forward where under the most advantageous circumstances the public school must leave it, and furnish the means of self-culture to all, whatever may have been their opportunities of acquiring knowledge, could not be omitted. I have in all cases availed myself of these avenues when open to me, to reach the public mind, and in turn have aimed to further their objects. During the ensuing winter, an effort will be made to secure a course of popular lectures in every large village, and to establish a library of at least four hundred volumes in every town in the State which is not now supplied. By creating a taste, and forming habits of reading in the young, by diffusing intelligence among all classes, by

introducing new topics and improving the whole time of conversation, and imparting activity to the public mind generally, these lectures and books will silently but powerfully help on the improvement of public schools, and all other educational institutions and influences.

15. By preparing a draft of a school act.

In pursuance of a resolution of the General Assembly, passed at the January session, 1844, I drew up a bill for an act respecting public schools, in which the various public and special acts on the subject were examined, revised and consolidated, and such additions engrafted as my observations on the practical operation of existing laws showed to be desirable or necessary. This bill was referred, in May, to the Committee of Education in the House, and by that Committee amended in a few particulars. On their motion, at the same session, I made an explanation of its various provisions, and especially of such features as were novel and likely to be misunderstood, before the two Houses of Assembly, the substance of which will be found in the Appendix, (Number viii.) That the relations of the bill to previous laws on the subject, and to the ability of the several towns to maintain an efficient system of public schools, might be clearly understood, I prepared a chronological review of all the legislation of the state on the subject, (Appendix, Number vii.) and a Table, (Number xi.) exhibiting the population, valuation, and present expenses of each town as far as ascertained. The bill thus prepared and explained in all its details and relations, passed the House of Representatives, and in the Senate was ordered to be printed and circulated among the school committee and people. In June, 1845, its further consideration was resumed in the Senate, after having been carefully revised by a committee of that body, and passed by a large majority. It received the same action in the House, and became a law, although its operation was postponed till after the next session of the General Assembly (October,) which has just closed, and now, on the 1st of November, it is the school system of Rhode Island, (Appendix, Number ix.)

I have thus presented a rapid and imperfect account of my own proceedings, as Agent of Public Schools, in the absence of any specific directions as to the mode and measures to be pursued in the act providing for my appointment. Although the measures which have been adopted have, it is believed, increased the amount of public interest and information on the subject, and thus imparted increased activity, regularity and usefulness to the system as it was, still a revision of the laws, at once simple and thorough, was indispensable to secure the advance in public opinion which has thus far been made, and to remove the obstacles which prevented the children of the state "from receiving the best education which those schools can be made to impart," as will, I think, be made evident under the remaining division of this Report.

[*To be continued.*]